

NEW JERSEY DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION
BUREAU OF EMERGENCY RESPONSE - REGION II

INVESTIGATION

CASE #: 87-10-07-2241

DATE: 10/7/87

TIME ARRIVED: 2337

TIME DEPARTED: 0135

RESPONDER: J. Manuel

LOCATION: Charles Wood Area

PROPERTY OWNER: U.S. Government

ADDRESS: Fort Monmouth
Tinton Falls
Monmouth County

LOCATION PHONE: (201) 532-4000

LOCAL HEALTH REP: Lester Jargowski

ORIGIN OF COMPLAINT: Monmouth County Communications

NATURE OF COMPLAINT: Report received from Monmouth County that an airborne contaminant was affecting residences one mile downwind of Fort Monmouth. Fort Monmouth Fire Department was reported to be handling an incident at a barn in the Robert Woods Area of the Fort. Responders Manuel and Pals departed to scene at 2300 hours.

FINDINGS:

2310-J. Manuel is informed by Trenton Dispatch that an Incident Command Post has been set-up at the Monmouth Mall Parking Lot located at Route 35 and Route 36. The Monmouth County Health Department has declared a State of Emergency.

2315-Responders Manuel and Pals link up on Interstate 195 in Wall Township. Map is consulted to determine an upwind approach to Command Post location. Wind direction was from due west at less than 10 mph.

2328-BER Officer R. Schrader informs J. Manuel via radio that homes are located 1/2 mile from suspected source on Fort Monmouth. Barn is reported to contain many cylinders; possibly flammable and/or poison materials. Exact nature of incident is still unknown.

2337-Responders Manuel and Pals arrive at Monmouth Mall Command Post. On-scene are Monmouth County Health Department, Monmouth County Sheriffs Department, local Police personnel and Monmouth County Communications van and HazMat van. Spoke to Lester Jargowski (MCHD) who stated that they really had no concrete information as to what was taking place. There were possibly some leaking pressurized gas cylinders in a shed at the Fort. Decision to set up C.P. at the Mall was made by Monmouth County Health Department due to lack of information from Army personnel.

2348-Sgt. Al Peters, N.J.S.P.-OEM, arrives onsite and briefed by J.

389464



Manuel. J. Manuel requests Monmouth Communication to attempt to contact Fort Monmouth to obtain further information.

2350-Discussion between J. Manuel, P. Pals, and L. Jargowski. It is decided that a small team will be sent to incident site to assess situation. Command Post and all other personnel will remain at Mall. Responding team will be Manuel and Pals in DEP vehicles and Myron Lavake in Monmouth HazMat truck. Sgt. Peters stated that he would remain with Command Post.

2355-J. Manuel updates Trenton Dispatch via radio.

2400-Lester Jargowski informs responders that he has received information from Fort Monmouth. Two men are reported to have "gone down" and were taken to a hospital. Fort Monmouth personnel have a Command Post set-up at the Robert Woods Area off Hope Road Jargowski stated that this may be within the contaminated area. Responders are prepared to depart to the Fort - extreme caution to be used; approach to be made from upwind with SCBA at ready.

0009-J. Manuel, P. Pals and M. Lavake arrive on-site at Robert Woods Area. Trenton Dispatch reports via radio that an EPA Team is in-route.

0010-J. Manuel requests information on incident status from Fort Monmouth Fire Captain Gussi. He stated that no assistance was needed. He further stated that DEP and Health Department personnel could depart. Gussi was informed that the Emergency Response Network had been activated and that specific information regarding the incident would be required. The Captain responded that the person in charge was at the shed location and only he could provide further information. We requested to see that person in charge. Gussi at that time appeared to make arrangement-Myron Lavake was taken in an Army Vehicle and Responders Manuel and Pals were directed to follow the army vehicle in one DEP vehicle. This was agreed to.

0015-The Army vehicle proceeded down a road to the incident scene, J. Manuel and P. Pals began to follow as previously agreed. An armed M.P. and Fire Captain Gussi blocked the road and informed J. Manuel that no one else would be permitted access. At that time, we again identified ourselves and reminded Gussi of our previous agreement to be allowed access to the site and access to incident information. Access was again denied and the M.P. stated that the area was under military control. Manuel and Pals turned around and discussed how to handle situation.

0019-J. Manuel updates Trenton Dispatch via radio. Monmouth Communications was contacted via radio and informed of developments. L. Jargowski requests we return to Command Post.

0024-J. Manuel and P. Pals arrive back at Command Post. L. Jargowski and W. Strucek (MCHD) state that they spoke to Fort Environmental Science Officer - he had no current information on incident, but indicated that the shed contained some compressed gases such as Argon, Helium, Nitrogen and Sulfur Dioxide. Sgt. Peters was informed of what had taken place, but did not feel he had authority on Federal Property. J. Manuel requested Monmouth Communications to attempt contact with the Post Commanding Officer.

0039-J. Manuel is paged. Trenton Dispatch contact via radio - they have Jim Staples on phone requesting update; he has been inundated with calls from the Press. Trenton was informed that we had no knowledge of what had taken place and that no press release should be given until factual information was relayed.

0040-Myron Lavake returns to C.P. from Fort. He stated that material involved was 5 gallon containers of unknown pesticide. One man was overcome and sent to hospital. Fort Monmouth personnel could not handle situation immediately because they had to wait for equipment and then personnel on-scene did not know how to operate monitoring instruments. A cleanup is currently underway. Site under military control. However, road in the area are public access.

0045-Duane Harrington (USEPA) arrives and is briefed by J. Manuel.

0050-Fort Monmouth finally contacted - they will send someone from the Provost Marshall's Office to escort a small group to the Fort.

0055-J. Manuel, P. Pals, Sgt. Peters, L. Jargowski, and D. Harrington proceed to Fort Fire Department in a marked State Police vehicle. A State Trooper was also present.

0058-An in-house debriefing was in progress involving Fort Monmouth personnel. This was chaired by Chief of Staff-Colonel Gornto. His phone is (201)532-3906. Another Fort contact is a Mr. Schwartz at (201)532-1258. Colonel Gornton stated that he would give a description of the incident for the benefit of State and Local representatives. Situation occurred as follows:

Site is a hazardous waste storage area used to stage hazardous materials and chemicals gathered from local Federal facilities prior to disposition through the Defense Property Disposal System. DOD Security Officer James Butler was on patrol when he noticed an odor at the storage area. While investigating, Butler became affected by the vapors. He reported incident to securing and was taken to the Fort Hospital. Blood gases were drawn and Butler has been kept for observation.

The storage area was isolated and the Fort Fire Department was notified. Fire Department personnel coming from some pesticides in storage. The pesticides were given as Malathion and Diazinon. The materials has been received for disposal from Sandy Hook and had been on-site for "awhile". The incident was terminated by putting lids on the containers. Materials will be overpacked tomorrow and Clean Venture will be hired for disposal. No discharge of liquid occurred.

After giving the above information, it was inferred that State and Local personnel were expected to leave.

0125-J. Manuel updated Trenton Dispatch via radio.

0135-State and Local responders secure from incident.

Conclusions and Recommendations:

It is this Responder's opinion that the above related matter was

grossly mis-managed by Fort Monmouth Personnel. A complete communications break-down between the responsible part and State and Local Emergency Management Personnel occurred. Had the release of an extremely hazardous substance occurred, the potential for a serious consequence was possible.

This investigator is at present, still not satisfied with the information given by Army personnel; the actual scene was never observed by DEP personnel and the time of occurrence is not known.

It is recommended that a meeting between DEP and Federal Government Officials be arranged as soon as possible to discuss this and future responses. The application of Title 3 as it relates to Federal Facilities should also be clarified. The manner with which this incident was handled, coupled with the potentially hazardous substances stored on Military facilities warrants an immediate solution to assure the proper handling of any future incidents. Matters such as this do not further the mutual trust and respect which must exist between the Federal Government, Local Agencies and the General Public.

James D. Manuel
Emergency Responder Specialist

Bruce Comfort
Supervisor-Region II

NEW JERSEY DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

DUTY OFFICER NOTIFICATION REPORT

CASE NO. 87 - 10 - 07 2241
(Yr) (Mo) (Day) (Time)DATE 10 - 07 - 87
(Mo) (Day) (Yr)REC'D BY R23/2243

(Office)

INCIDENT REPORT BY:

Name Operator 22Phone 201 462 1100

Street _____

City _____

Affiliation/Title Monmouth County Communications

State _____

INCIDENT LOCATION:

Name (Site) Charles wood section of Ft Monmouth☒ FacilityPhone 201 532-4000Street Hope RoadCity Titon FallsCounty Monmouth

State _____

Zip Code _____

Date of Incident: 10 - 07 - 87
(Mo) (Day) (Yr)Time: 2241

IDENTITY OF SUBSTANCE(S) SPILLED, RELEASED, ETC.:

Name of Substance(s) [Gas, Liquid, Solid]: Gas Vapor☐ Known☐ Suspected☒ Unknown

CAS Number: _____

Amount Released/Spilled 100 + Cylinders☐ Actual☐ Potential☐ Estimated

Substance Contained (Y/N/U)

Type of Release/Spill:

☐ Terminated☒ Continuous☐ IntermittentHazardous Material (Y/N) ☒

NATURE OF INCIDENT:

☐ Complaint☒ Munic. Notification☐ Emergency☐ Sub. 20

INCIDENT DESCRIPTION:

☐ Fire☐ Explosion☒ Air Rel☐ Spill☐ MVA☐ Derailment☐ Smoke/Dust☒ Odors☐ Sewage☐ NJPDES☐ Noise☐ Illegal Dumping☐ Wildlife☐ Equip Start-up/Shutdown, Equip Fail/Upset, etc.☐ Other (specify) _____

Injuries (Y/N/U)

Facility Evacuation (Y/N/U)

Contamination of ☒ Air ☐ Land ☐ Water

Potable Water Source (Y/N/U)

Receiving Water _____

Location Type: ☒ Residential ☐ Industrial☐ Rural

Public Exposure (Y/N/U)

Police at Scene (Y/N/U)

Assistance Requested (Y/N/U)

Wind Direction/Speed E 10/10

Precipitation (rain/snow) _____

☐ Sensitive Population (Hosp., School, Nurs. Home)STATUS AT INCIDENT SCENE See Page 2

RESPONSIBLE PARTY:

☒ Known☐ Suspected☐ UnknownCompany Name FT Monmouth

Phone _____

Contact _____

Title _____

Street _____

City _____

County _____

State _____

Zip Code _____

OFFICIALS NOTIFIED (Name/Title):

NJSP: Alt / _____ Phone _____ Date/Time _____ (T/M)Local Health: Alt / _____ Phone _____ Date/Time _____ (T/M)Local Munic: Patterson / _____ Phone _____ Date/Time _____ (T/M)USEPA: Notified / _____ Phone _____ Date/Time _____ (T/M)

INCIDENT REFERRED TO:

☒ DEQ ☐ DWR ☐ DSWM ☐ DHSM ☒ DHWM ☒ DOH ☐ DFG ☐ DPF ☐ DCJ ☐ DCRRegion: ☐ Northern ☐ Metro ☒ Central ☐ Southern1. Name/Affil Manuel/Pala

Phone _____

Date/Time 10/7/87 2302

(T/M)

2. Name/Affil _____

Phone _____

Date/Time _____

(T/M)

3. Name/Affil _____

Phone _____

Date/Time _____

(T/M)

IMMEDIATE DEP RESPONSE (Y/N)

[Emergency (Y/N)]

Enforcement (Y/N)]

COMMENTS _____

